



McLane Children's Hospital
SCOTT & WHITE



DEAR PARENTS,

Sending your son or daughter to Camp Dreamcatcher takes some planning and organization. We hope that this Camper and Parent Guide will help you both get ready. Keep in mind that this is a great opportunity for your child to forget about his or her illness and have a wonderful and happy experience away from home.

Share this information with your camper. And if you have any questions or concerns, please call me at 254-724-0346 or send me an email at jdamron@sw.org!

Thank you for sharing your child with us at Camp Dreamcatcher 2013!

Sincerely,

Jenny Damron, CCLS
Child Life Specialist
Director, Camp Dreamcatcher



**CAMPER
AND
PARENT
GUIDE**

WHY IT IS GOOD TO SEND YOUR CHILD TO CAMP DREAMCATCHER

Sending your child to camp for children with cancer and blood disorders is one of the best decisions you could make!

The camp experience is rich and rewarding, and your child will make memories and learn lessons that will last a lifetime. In many respects it can help shape the adults that they will become. Here are just some of the benefits:

- Camp fosters personal growth
- The camp environment is nurturing, but also promotes independence
- Your child will learn to get along with others; learn to compromise; develop a sense of team work; take responsibility for themselves as well as their health; develop and refine their social skills
- Your child will face challenges, overcome fears, gain confidence and self-esteem all while making new friends
- Your child will mature and expand their horizons in a safe and caring environment
- Your child will grow emotionally, intellectually, and physically
- Your child will try new activities
- Your child will return home with new interests and skills

Being with other children with cancer/blood disorders and their brothers or sisters, will make your child feel like "one of the team". Camp is designed to meet many different needs. The staff is trained to work with children of all kinds and many counselors are cancer survivors themselves. Camp provides an opportunity for your child to learn to deal emotionally with what they have been through or what they are going through by interaction with each other.

MOST IMPORTANT, YOUR CHILD WILL HAVE FUN (and won't even realize that they're getting anything more out of the experience)!

So let's get you and your camper ready!

DATES FOR CAMP DREAMCATCHER 2013

NEW DATES: Sunday, June 30-Friday, July 5, 2013

DEPART FOR CAMP

Sunday, June 30th

Registration will take place at Scott & White Hospital. Buses will pick up campers from the hospital and will take them to camp. We will stop in Caldwell on the way for a wonderful lunch!

DEPART FOR HOME

Friday, July 5th

Buses will meet us at camp and bring us all back to Scott & White Hospital. Upon arrival, we will have welcome home party and we'll have a special screening of the slideshow from camp. Please come prepared to stay for this event...the kids will want you to see their week (in pictures) at camp!

*** Exact times and locations for these two events will follow in an additional mail-out.**

What to Expect...

For the Camper

Before your child sets off for camp he/she may be feeling a little nervous or anxious. These emotions are entirely normal and to be expected. No matter how your child might be feeling, it is important to remind them that they're not alone. Almost every camper has the same thoughts. Talk to him or her about how they feel. Most times just sharing feelings helps!

When they get to camp, campers will be expected to assume responsibility for themselves and their belongings. Now is a good time (if you haven't already) to get your child used to taking on some responsibilities...to clean up after themselves, make their beds, brush their teeth (without you asking!), etc....

The best thing about going to Camp Dreamcatcher is that your child will already have a lot in common with their fellow campers. They won't feel like they're the only one who has to deal with special needs or conditions...everyone will. By learning more about their illness as a group, and learning new and exciting skills and activities, your child will become more self-sufficient and self-confident!

For the Parent

Before you send your child off to camp you may be feeling a little nervous or anxious. That's normal. Remember to discuss this with your child. Be honest about your feelings. Let them know you'll miss them, you'll think about them, and you'll stay in touch.

Review the information in this guide regarding preparing your camper for camp.

Camp Medical Staff

As for the camp itself, you should feel comfortable with its policies and health facilities. The staff at Camp Dreamcatcher has several years of experience running a weeklong camp for children with cancer and blood disorders from Scott & White Hospital.

There will be a physician in residence at Camp Dreamcatcher for the entire week. Also, there will be nurses to assist in the supervision of medications and central line/port-a-cath care.

The children's treatment schedules will be adjusted in the best way possible to accommodate their needs throughout the week.

Back-up facilities for care and lab work have been arranged. Parents will be notified if a serious problem arises.

Please bring your camper's medications to registration on **Sunday, June 30thth**. All medication must be sent in original containers. Send enough medication for the week, allowing an extra day's worth of medicine in case of accident. We will arrange appropriate dressing materials and flushing solutions for those who have central lines or port-a-caths.

Importance of Completing All Camp Forms

The camp forms are necessary for the protection of your child at camp. Your child's health is important to us. The information given on these forms must be thorough and accurate (and legible!) If emergency care is required, this is the information the doctor or nurse will need.

All forms are due by:

Friday, April 19, 2013

You may bring them to the clinic or mail them to:

Jenny Damron, CCLS
DESK VK: Pedi Hematology/Oncology: Camp Dreamcatcher
Scott & White Hospital
2401 South 31st Street
Temple, TX 76508

CLOTHING RULES/OPTIONAL ITEMS

Please mark all personal items and clothing with the camper's name in permanent ink. Do not send expensive clothes or shoes to camp. There are no laundry facilities for campers at camp, so send enough clothes, especially underwear and socks.

RULES

Closed toe shoes and socks will be worn at all times outside of the cabins or showers – no sandals and no flip flops
Modest swimwear, shorts, & tops are required.

No short-shorts

No revealing hip huggers, bare bellies, or bra tops

No exposed underwear

No inappropriate messages or advertisements on T-shirts or clothing

CAMPERS MAY NOT BRING

Cell Phones (If campers bring cell phones, they will be collected by staff at the beginning of the week and will be re-distributed on the last day)

Gum

Candy, food, or drinks

Gun, knives, weapons

Toys that can be used in hand-to-hand combat

Expensive jewelry

Alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products

Bring toiletry articles such as toothbrush, soap, toothpaste, shampoo, comb, cup, etc. packaged in plastic containers. Put everything in zip-lock bags or tote bag so they can be neatly stored in the washrooms.

IPods, Cell phones, hand held video games, MP3 Players, etc. are **NOT** recommended to bring to camp. *Camp Dreamcatcher will not be responsible for the loss or breakage of any of these items.*

PACKING LIST

# BROUGHT	# SUGGESTED	ITEM
	2 pair	Closed toe shoes
	1 pair	Flip flops or pool shoes
	7 pair	Shorts
	7	Shirts
	7 pair	Underwear
	7 pair	Socks
	1 pair	Long Pants (optional)
	1	Swimsuit
	2 pair	Pajamas

	1	Pillow with pillowcase
	1	Light blanket/cover OR sleeping bag
	1	Bath towel **
	1	Twin sheet set **
	1	Laundry bag OR extra pillowcase for dirty clothes
	1	Beach towel

	1	Bag of toiletries: comb/brush soap and shampoo toothbrush and toothpaste sunscreen and chapstick
	1	Flashlight with batteries
	1	Poncho or Raincoat

	1-week supply	*** MEDICINE (You must send a one-week supply of all medicine needed!!!)*** All medications MUST be in original bottles.
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PLEASE NOTE: Each child must bring his/her own **BATH TOWEL** and twin size **SHEET SET**. *These will NO LONGER be provided by Camp for All.*

BRING THESE IF YOU LIKE:

Camera
Stationery and stamps
Favorite stuffed animal
Book to read

LEAVE THESE AT HOME:

Candy/gum/snacks (snacks are provided and NOT allowed in cabins)
Jewelry/Valuables
Water guns
Skateboards/roller blades/etc
Hand held video games
Cellular Phones
IPODs/MP3 players

General Information

Funding

Camp Dreamcatcher is provided free of charge for Scott and White patients and siblings.

Facility

Camp Dreamcatcher takes place at Camp for All (located in Burton, Texas) The facility was designed to provide an opportunity for children and young adults with special needs to have a place to experience a camp environment. You can learn more about Camp for All by visiting their website at www.campforall.org.

Counselors

In order to become a counselor at Camp Dreamcatcher, individuals (18 and older) must provide an application and references. Once that information has been received they are interviewed and a criminal background check is run. Most of the Camp Dreamcatcher staff members have been coming to the camp for many years. All counselors attend mandatory Training, which includes the state of Texas child abuse course and examination.

Camp Dreamcatcher requires that campers and counselors abide by the "Rule of Threes". This means that a child is never alone with one counselor or one child. There must be three people present at all times.

Camp Conditions

Camp Dreamcatcher takes place at the Camp For All facility.

Shared cabins with shared bathrooms – curtains, no doors

3 to 4 counselors per cabin and 11 to 12 max campers per cabin

Two bunk beds in each cabin. No campers in top bunks.

Very, very hot weather. Cabins are air conditioned but most of the time is spent outside in the heat.

Campers are with their counselors at all times.

Camp food is oriented to children and is "camp food".

Cabins

Camp Dreamcatcher campers range in age from 6 to 15. Children are grouped into cabins by age and cognitive abilities. The boys cabins are clustered together and the girls cabins are in a cluster as well. They are never allowed in each others cabins.

Shared Group

Each year, Camp Dreamcatcher shares the Camp for All facility with Camp Rainbow Connection. They are a camp for children with cancer and blood disorders from UTMB in Galveston, TX.

Activities

Camp activities include ropes course, swimming pool, archery, dances, horses, canoeing, sports, fishing, arts and crafts, cooking, biking, and more.

Feminine Issues

Girls who menstruate while they are at camp will only be allowed in the swimming pool if they use tampons, not pads. The camp recommends that you teach your daughter to use tampons, prior to camp, so she won't miss out on the water activities.

Safety

The facility staff are extensively trained and certified in all of the activities that we offer to our Dreamcatcher campers.

Safety is emphasized. However, Camp Dreamcatcher can assume no responsibility for accidents, illness, or loss of personal items, by fire, theft, or camper carelessness.

Communication

Campers do not have access to telephones during the week of camp and we request that calls from home be for emergency reasons. Campers may not bring cell phones to camp. In case of EMERGENCY ONLY, the Camp For All/Camp Dreamcatcher number in Burton is **979-289-3094**.

Mail is very important to our campers and we encourage parents to write early and often. Feel free to send "care packages" with books, games, puzzles, comics, etc., but **DO NOT SEND FOOD OR CANDY**.

No food is allowed in the cabins because it is an invitation to fire ants and other pests. Your child would love thoughtful letters and cards. To write to your child, please do so at the following address:

Camper's Name
Camp for All
c/o Camp Dreamcatcher
6301 Rehburg Road
Burton, TX 77835

Photography

Camp Dreamcatcher reserves the right to use photographs and/or video pictures of our campers for promotional purposes. Camp Dreamcatcher and Camp For All will be filming and taking photographs during the camping term. Unless otherwise notified in writing, Camp Dreamcatcher may use all camper photographs and/or videos in promotional materials.

Sample Daily Schedule

Each cabin will be assigned actual activities, but the following gives you an idea about what your child's schedule will be each day.

7:00-7:30	Early Morning Fishing
7:45-8:00	Announcements at the Chapel
8:05-8:15	Flag Raising
8:15-8:45	Breakfast
8:45-9:00	Morning "Aerobics" (fun songs, dances)
9:00-9:45	Activity 1
10:00-10:45	Activity 2
11:00-11:45	Activity 3
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	Cabin/Rest Time
3:00-3:30	Canteen (snack)
3:30-4:30	Free Swim
4:45-5:45	Activity 4
6:00-7:00	Dinner
7:30-9:30	Evening Activity
9:30-10:00	Ready for bed
10:00	Lights Out

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Talk to your child about camp and any anxiety they may be feeling...but don't talk too much! Avoid expressing mixed feelings (i.e. "I'm so excited for you, but boy am I going to miss you!") Discuss homesickness with them and explain that it's a normal emotion. They may feel homesick for a few days or they may not, but still go and have a great time.

Set your child up to succeed at camp. Don't promise to come pick them up early if they are unhappy. The counselors are trained to understand issues of homesickness and going home is the very last resort. Many years of experience has demonstrated that once the children are busy having fun and making new friends, the separation anxiety disappears.

Be sure to alert the Camp Director, ahead of time, to any special needs your child may have or if there are any problems or changes at home. It will help the staff deal more effectively with anything that should arise.

Practice sleepovers at a friend or grandparent's house

Start packing early and include your child in the process.

Talk about what camp will be like before your child leaves.

Send letters ahead of time to arrive each day of camp. Acknowledge that you will miss your child, but they will have fun. For example, say "I will miss you but I know that you will have a great time at camp." Notes, stickers, jokes, riddles, or other little things that you can send will let them know you are thinking of them.

Pack a favorite item from home, such as a picture or a stuffed animal.

Give your child some pre-addressed, pre-stamped post cards for them to use while at camp.

Encourage your camper to get involved and make new friends.

Remind your child to treat their counselors and fellow campers with respect.

- Respect their privacy
- Cooperate with everyone
- Be a good sport
- Use good manners

When you say goodbye to your camper at the bus or at the camp, give them a big hug and say a quick goodbye. It's best to keep it short and sweet so they have little time to think about your departure.

Finally, head home knowing that your child is going to have a fabulous camp experience!

After Camp Advice

Be sure to be on time when picking up your child from camp.

Give your child some space before getting an in-depth conversation about their experiences at camp.

Once they start talking, listen enthusiastically!

Acceptance to Camp

Due to a large number of children wanting to attend Camp Dreamcatcher, we will be using our priority system again to organize the applicants. Due to limited space, siblings will only be allowed to attend if space permits.

In the initial application process, only ONE sibling per patient will be considered for a spot in camp.

In 2012, we were at maximum capacity and know that there are many new campers for 2013.

(Camp for All has decreased the number of campers we can have in each cabin, so we will actually have room for a FEWER number of campers for 2013.)

PRIORITY SYSTEM

Before making camp assignments, we will use the following priority system:

PRIORITY 1: New Camper, a child who has never attended Camp Dreamcatcher and is currently on active treatment

PRIORITY 2: Former Camper who is currently on active treatment

PRIORITY 3: New Camper, a child who has never attended Camp Dreamcatcher

PRIORITY 4: Former Camper, a 15 year old, this will be their last summer to attend

PRIORITY 5: Former Camper, a child who has been to camp who needs to return to camp because of special circumstances or medical needs

PRIORITY 6: Former Camper, a child who has been to Camp Dreamcatcher one or more times. The following will be considered:

6A-attended camp one time

6B-length of time since last camping experience and medical need

6C-age and if child has attended the last two years